IN THE CLAIMS:

The following listing of the claims replaces all earlier listings and all earlier versions.

1. - 32. (Canceled).

33. (Previously presented) An apparatus for forming a registered ink-laden image on a non-planar printing surface of a shaped edible piece, the apparatus comprising:

a transport surface including at least one shaped recess having a non-planar surface corresponding to the shaped edible piece and a vacuum hole positioned within the shaped recess, said edible piece being laterally, longitudinally and rotationally positioned within the shaped recess at a predetermined position;

a first printer station at a first position along a transport path that applies a first component image of said registered image in ink on the shaped piece while in the predetermined position;

a second printer station downstream from the first position that applies a second component image of said registered image on the edible piece in registration with the first component image of the registered image;

a vacuum pump in communication with and applying a pressure differential to the vacuum hole to maintain the edible piece in the predetermined position within the recess while the edible piece is at and between the first and second print stations; and

a valve system connected to the vacuum pump that applies a first pressure differential at the printer stations and a second pressure differential, less than the first pressure differential, between the printer stations.

34. (Previously presented) The apparatus according to claim 33, wherein the non-planar printing surface of said edible piece protrudes above the transport surface.

35. (Original) The apparatus according to claim 33, wherein the vacuum hole is positioned at a deepest portion of said shaped recess.

36. (Original) The apparatus according to claim 33, wherein the vacuum hole is positioned on a side wall of the shaped recess.

37. (Canceled)

38. (Original) The apparatus according to claim 33, further comprising a vacuum plenum system between the shaped recesses and the vacuum pump and disposed below the transport path.

39. (Original) The apparatus according to claim 38, wherein the vacuum plenum system includes first and second portions that extend transverse to the transport path below the first and second print stations, respectively, and a third portion including sub-plenums that extend parallel to the transport path between the first and second print stations.

40. (Original) The apparatus according to claim 39, wherein the first and second portions of the plenum system are subject to first and second pressure differentials and that are substantially equal, and the third portion of the plenum system is subject to a third pressure differential less than the first and second pressure differentials.

41. (Original) The apparatus according to claim 39, wherein the transport surface comprises at least one carrier bar including a row of shaped recesses identical to said at least one shaped recess, wherein said first and second portions or the plenum system are dimensional to have widths substantially equal to a width of the row of shaped recesses on the carrier bar.

42. (Original) The apparatus according to claim 41, wherein each of said sub-plenums in said third portion of said plenum system corresponds to one of said shaped recesses in said row.

43. (Original) The apparatus according to claim 33, wherein said transporting recess portion includes a resilient portion.

44. (Original) The apparatus according to claim 33, wherein said apparatus comprises a multi-lane system and total output of said apparatus is at least 1,000 pieces per lane per hour.

45. (Original) The apparatus according to claim 33, wherein said first printing station or said second printing station comprises an offset printer.

46. (Original) The apparatus according to claim 33, wherein said first printing station or said second printing station comprises an inkjet printer.

47. - 60. (Canceled).

61. (New) An apparatus for printing a multicolor composite image formed from at least two component ink-laden images on a plurality of shaped confectionery pieces each having at least one non-planar surface, said apparatus comprising:

means for printing a first component ink-laden image on said at least one non-planar surface of said shaped confectionery pieces at a first print position;

means for printing a subsequent second component ink-laden image on said at least one non-planar surface of said shaped confectionery pieces at a second print position;

means for moving a transport surface including said shaped confectionery pieces from said first print position to said second print position, wherein said transport surface includes a plurality of transport recess portions each provided with at least one vacuum hole; and

means for positioning said shaped confectionery pieces in a predetermined location temporarily fixed laterally, longitudinally and rotationally at least in part by vacuum pressure within a respective one of said transport recess portions at and least between the first and second print positions, to thereby maintain registration of said

first component ink-laden image relative to said second component ink-laden image so as to enable said multicolor composite image to be formed.